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REPORT of PROCEEDINGS and OBSERVATIONS, by HENRY  
JAMES TOWNSEND, Esq., *during a visit to Paris, in  
September 1844.*

*To the Council of the Government School of Design.*

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

WHEN, at the end of the past Session, you conferred on me the honor of an appointment as Master in the School of Design, I proceeded to Paris, in order to prosecute such general observations as might tend to increase the utility of my subsequent official labors. Two objects, however, formed the subject of special instructions from Mr. Wilson before my departure, and on these I beg to offer some comments, with a record of such facts as throw light, incidentally or directly, on the matters in view.

The points of enquiry proposed to me by Mr. Wilson were, first, THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION ADOPTED IN THE PURSUIT OF ART; secondly, THE WORKS AND METHODS OF THE MODELLERS IN PARIS.

It was remarked, and with justice, by that gentleman, that the regular evolution of such talent in designing indicates some peculiar merit in the *system* under which the young men in Paris prosecute their studies; and since drawing of all kinds—whether as regards the human figure or ornament—depends on the careful education of perceptions through the eye, he suggested that the range of observation should not be confined to the “Schools of Design,” but that it might extend with interest, and perhaps with value, to the ateliers of the great teachers of Fine Art.

With these, then, I commence; because the details of the routine adopted in such studios will form a key to the rules observed in the more public Institutions. The subjoined particulars may be regarded as common features of the system of education in such classes as those presided over by DELAROCHE, DROLLING, COIGNET, PICOT, &c. &c. The pupils consist, mainly, of future painters, to whom these distinguished artists afford, at a very trifling remuneration, the valuable lessons dictated by their experience. Payments are made monthly. The professor attends thrice a week. Admitted at any age, and without previous examination or preparatory study of art, the student is at once made to draw from “the round,”—from busts, portions of the face and figure, or statues, according to circumstances. Drawings or prints are placed, as copies, before those only whose dullness is supposed to require such an exemption from the usual mode of initiation. The sole material at first permitted to the draughtsman is *charcoal*, the use of the chalk being reserved for more advanced stages. This employment of charcoal alone may be supposed to check the self-love that



would place value on "first attempts," while the ready erasure of markings offers every facility for the attainment of true drawing. It is said, moreover, that from this early period and practice the designer may date the free handling of so useful an instrument in after years. Be this as it may, drawing after drawing is made in charcoal, the most earnest attention being directed to the main indications of surface, and especially to the "*mouvement*," as it is termed,—that is, the balance of the body, and of parts among themselves. Thus tutored, the pupil enters early on that which constitutes the most prominent characteristic of a French artist's education—namely, *the continuous application to studies from the Life*. For this purpose, models attend *four hours each day*—the same model, in the same attitude, during that period, for a week together! The care with which these drawings are executed, the anxiety with which the play of surface is imitated, and the use of the chalk and the charcoal with so much patience over an extended time, may be regarded as the true source of that power of "*modelling*," as the painter terms it, which the French students pre-eminently display. This power is, indeed, an object of so much solicitude, that clever figures often remain incomplete at the end of the week. Both in painting and in drawing from the life, the *à peu près* system is thoroughly discouraged by the masters, their constant demand being a pure outline and most careful filling up. Anatomy, as a study, is not said to be much insisted on; Houdon's figure of the muscles and the traditional science of the atelier being the principal stock in this department of an artist's enquiry. On commencing to *paint*, studies are made of heads and portions of the figure, both small and colossal, and it is then that the professor enters more generally upon the known rules of art, enlarging his communications according to the progress of the pupil, until he at length gives him a hint that he should commence a picture, and pursue an independent path. It is just preceding this stage, however, that the class is engaged often in the principles of Composition, "subjects" being proposed which are treated by all, and the results of which undergo a critical commentary. The duration of these studies is various. From what I could gather, there are few remarks on the theory of Color, on Beauty, or on the properties of Chiar'oscuro, as applied in painting. If this be the case, we have, perhaps, an indication of the cause of defects, as well as excellencies, in the French School. The works of the public galleries lead to the conclusion that the effects of repeated or powerful "*glazings*" are either little understood, or much undervalued, except by Delacroix, Schœffer, and a few other great men; while, among the mass, the use of the positive, unbroken color, is as prevalent as the choice thereof is often inharmonious. There is little contrast of "transparency" and "opacity," even in the cabinet pictures. The rounding of the flesh is generally exquisite, the color of it frequently, *per se*, beautiful; but that subduing of one portion to give effect to another—which has been practised by the greatest masters of other nations, and with success by those of our own—has, although founded on the effects of Nature, been sparingly exhibited in the works of our neighbours. Truly great, however, are their productions in other



respects; and stirring as is the energy of their thoughts, they never appear to quail in the communication of them to the beholder. Their power of embodiment is extraordinary; and is doubtless attributable to that faculty of delineating structure which is developed by the *untiring studies from the life* commenced so early in the private ateliers.

That which corresponds with our Royal Academy is the *ECOLE DES BEAUX ARTS*. The instruction is gratis, admission being obtained by competitions, in the months of March and September. Here the educational system is nearly the same, in reference to elementary studies, as that in the schools of the private professors, the most eminent of whom, indeed, also occupy "chairs" in this institution, and are paid by the Government.

The general tendency of the arrangements is to promote a spirit of *emulation*, and consequent industry, among the *Elèves*,—this being, in fact, the distinguishing feature in the training of youth throughout the French metropolis. The competitors for admission are generally five hundred, of which number perhaps one hundred succeed. The "admitted" are divided into two classes of "odd and even numbers," and the studies of these two classes are conducted, week by week,—*alternately after the Antique and the Life*,—in the two great amphitheatres devoted to the purpose. The model sits six consecutive days. The proportion of sculptors is about twenty in a hundred. The professors attend in rotation, from five to seven in the evening.

During the studentship, there is a monthly competition, the decisions being given every quarter. One silver and two bronze medals are distributed, for each month, the third-class medal being worth no more than seven francs. The merits of the drawings, however, being rigidly scanned, much value is attached to success, particularly as the medallists are entitled to a choice of places and to a prolonged right to academic study, while the non-medallists must contend again at the expiration of six months.

There are two general concours, called the "*Têtes d'Expression*," and the "*Prix de Rome*."

The trial of the "*Têtes d'Expression*" occurs twice in the year. In this no pupil can compete who is not a medallist, is not a Frenchman, and who has not satisfied the master of perspective. The studies are made life-size, from the living model, who assumes the appropriate attitude and expression under the direction of the professor. A resemblance to the original is required, in conjunction with the true and forcible working-out of the given theme. Twelve usually compete, and their labors last six hours a day, during four days. Two gold medals are awarded. The successful efforts arising from this contest are hung around one of the halls, with other specimens of the works of distinguished students. They appeared to me the most extraordinary of this class of productions. The anatomical knowledge, admirable drawing, and skill of painting displayed in them are worthy of all praise, and are the best proofs of the value of the system whence they emanate.

The "*Prix de Rome*" is the grand mainspring of the ambition of the *Elèves*, and offers to the successful competitor the most substantial



advantages. The conditions are—age under thirty, and French birth; but it is not necessary that previous studies should have been pursued at the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*. In this institution, the competitors assemble, generally to the amount of one hundred and fifty. On their meeting, a subject is proposed, from which a sketch in oil colors, 18 inches by 6, is to be made at once. Twenty are selected, who are considered worthy of undergoing further trials. The figure, in three-quarter size, from life, is painted by these chosen ones, and a reduction is then effected to TEN. To these ten the field is left for the ultimate contest, and each receives, as an equivalent for his expenses, a sum of one hundred and fifty francs. A subject is then proposed, and the same day a sketch is made, and “stamped;” and from the general tenor of this design, the subsequent painting must exhibit no departure. Models are allowed, but neither engravings nor unstamped sketches are permitted, and the process of the picture now advances during seventy-two days. The prizes, which consist of a “*Grand Prix*” and two secondary ones, confer exemption from the “*Conscription*.” The winner of the chief prize in the present year, was said to be freed from the ranks by his successful effort made under leave of absence! To the two second prizes also is given a reward of five hundred francs. The chief prize, however, brings with it the honor of a *Laurel Crown*, bestowed either at the Institute, or in the “*Hemicycle*” Theatre at the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*. The victor is then sent to Rome, on his studies, where he is lodged and maintained at the French Academy, under an eminent Director, and with a further allowance of £60 per annum.

The like conditions apply to contests between sculptors and architects; similar advantages being extended, every fourth year, to engravers, landscape-painters, and die-sinkers. The talents of the sculptors are tried by various efforts in “*bas relief*” and “*ronde bosse*,” after which the *grand prix* is determined by either a low relief or the whole figure. I saw the contributions of this autumn, when exposed at the *École*. Few were deficient in merit, some were remarkable for their executive power. The black look of the clay, employed by the French, much interferes with the effects of relievos, as was evidenced by the superior impression made by the chief prize, when cast in M. Jacquet’s atelier.

The conditions attached to the mission to Rome, are the following:—

First year.—Observation and General Studies.

Second year.—A Single Figure, for exposition at the “*Beaux Arts*.”

Third year.—A Composition, of any size.

Fourth year.—A Copy from Ancient Masters, generally from Raffaele’s Frescoes, the size of the original.

Fifth year.—An original Picture.

It is natural to enquire whether such extensive competitions, thus yearly taking place, are productive of effects at all commensurate with the exertions made. As this, my Lords and Gentlemen, is a point that may interest you, in reference to the plans pursued at the School under your government, permit me to observe that genius is generally of slow, as well as uncertain, evolution. That system would therefore appear to



be the best, in an educational establishment, which would afford to genius, when it does manifest itself, the "*opportunity*" without which it might exist in vain. This may appear a trite remark, because such is more or less the object of all prize competition; but I would venture to call your attention to the fact, that the want of subsequent arrangements too frequently leaves unemployed the talent educated. Seldom is it that such admirable consecutive measures are adopted as those in the *ECOLE DES BEAUX ARTS*, under the ordinance of the French Government! It is a frequent remark, that the danger resulting from an academic prize is the degree of self-content thereby sometimes produced. How desirable then, to entail, as a necessary consequence of the prize, the regular production of certain works, having for their object the double achievement of original thought, and copying from the works of others! Such is the case in France. The *Grand Prix de Rome* carries with it, for the time, unbounded public estimation. Thousands flock to see such works; and the painter or sculptor, if left to wander about as an undirected travelling student, might rest contented with the dream of his past renown. At Rome, however, he is provided with a residence,—a home, where his instructor and guide is always one of the foremost of his distinguished countrymen,—who exercises a well rewarded duty in stimulating young ambition among the inspiring relics of former ages. Thus, year after year, talented men are fostered under a nation's care, and when high genius springs forth, it repays this valuable nurture by the grateful tribute of a lofty work. The production of the "fifth year," if merely respectable, is generally purchased by the French Government, at about £200. The work of M. PAPETY, thirty feet long, was rewarded with £1000. It was called "*Un Rêve de Bonheur*," in which the artist gave way to imaginations, the high poetry of which was equalled by the skill with which they were presented. He won universal applause and high name; and, although such large dimensions have been forsaken, his pictures still carry out the promise of such a commencement. In one of the salons of the *Ecole*, I was delighted with the sculptures of another of these prizewinners, M. DESACHY. His relief representing "Early Christians burying their child in the catacombs of Rome," is admirably simple in its arrangement, full of elevated feeling in the expression and design.

In this *Palais des Beaux Arts*, the very building itself inspires a consciousness of the respect willingly accorded to the avocations to which it is devoted. On every side, incorporated with the edifice, are mementos of the past, appealing either to the feeling of beauty, or to reverence for the great predecessors in art. The chefs d'œuvres of Michael Angelo in painting and sculpture,\* re-appear in the "chapel." The choicest riches of sculpture, from Greece to the middle ages, and to the present day, are disposed through its superb saloons; and the very doors exhibit valuable relics of wood carving,—the best representatives of "*Ornament*" being constantly mingled with the specimens of higher

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\* At one end of the chapel is a copy of the "Last Judgment," nearly, if not quite as large as the original.



art. Nor are its students left unnoticed in these testimonies to worth. Besides the chambers in which their first distinguished productions are displayed, some of their subsequent labors are mingled with the best in the saloons; and in the amphitheatre devoted to the *prize-giving*, the fine genius of Delaroche has assembled the artist chiefs of various epochs to witness, as it were, the triumph of the rising youth of France.

I will now mention the institutions which it was in my power to see, or respecting which I could obtain information.

Devoted to artistic education, there are in Paris, an "*Ecole Royale gratuite de Mathematique, de Dessin, et de Sculpture d'Ornement*;" an "*Ecole Royale spéciale et gratuite de Dessin pour les Jeunes Personnes*;" an "*Athénée des Beaux Arts*," in the Rue de Seine, conducted by M. Gendre, where anatomy, perspective, chemistry, &c., are taught in "*ateliers d'application*;" a "*Conservatoire et Ecole des Arts et Metiers*;" and an "*Ecole Communale de Dessin et de Sculpture*," under the municipality of Paris.

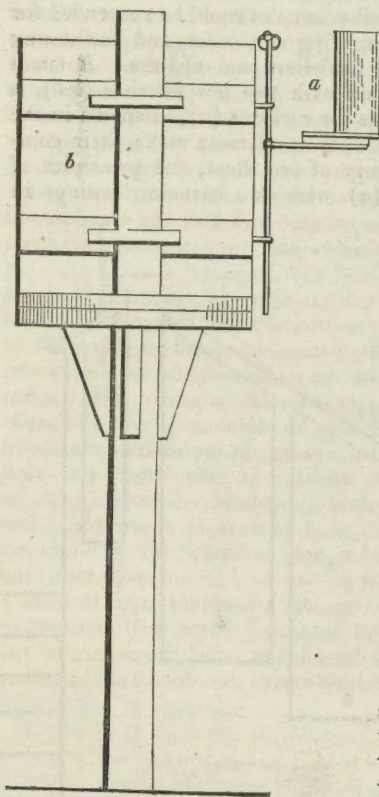
Of these many institutions, destined for the training of the practical artist and workman, the "*Conservatoire des Arts*" was closed while I was in Paris; but I noticed a testimony to its efficiency in the *Journal des Debats*, of August 22nd, that three of those who obtained gold medals at the recent *Exposition Industrielle*, were among the "*Anciens Elèves*" of this school, which I understand to be open to students of all nations. The lady who presides over the female department of the School of Design at Somerset House, informed me, generally, of the arrangements at the "*Ecole pour les Jeunes Personnes*," of which, after some difficulty, she obtained an inspection last year.\* My attention was therefore drawn to others; and first, the Government School of Design, as being the parallel to our own, naturally attracted my notice.

THE ECOLE ROYALE DE DESSIN is situated in the Rue del' Ecole de Medicine. M. Belloc, the Director, with whom Mr. Wilson had advised me to communicate, was absent from town, but an officer of the establishment politely afforded me an inspection of the arrangements, and such information as lay in his power. In many respects, the institution over which you, my Lords and Gentlemen, preside, is superior to that of Paris—superior in space, in ventilation, and in compass of artistic and industrial wealth. In the order of studies, as might be expected, in an institution commenced so long ago as 1766, the plans of the Ecole Royal appear most admirable. The School was established, "*En faveur des ouvriers qui se destinent aux professions mecaniques*," and, so far as I could ascertain, the workmen and others avail themselves of this opportunity to a very considerable extent; as in the School here, so I found, in Paris, young men who are compelled to work all day glad to avail themselves of the evening studies. One of the printed notices of the routine at this Ecole

\* The studies are figure drawing, ornament, landscape, animals, and flowers, under the care of two lady professors. It was opened in 1803. It presents, I believe, no remarkable feature.



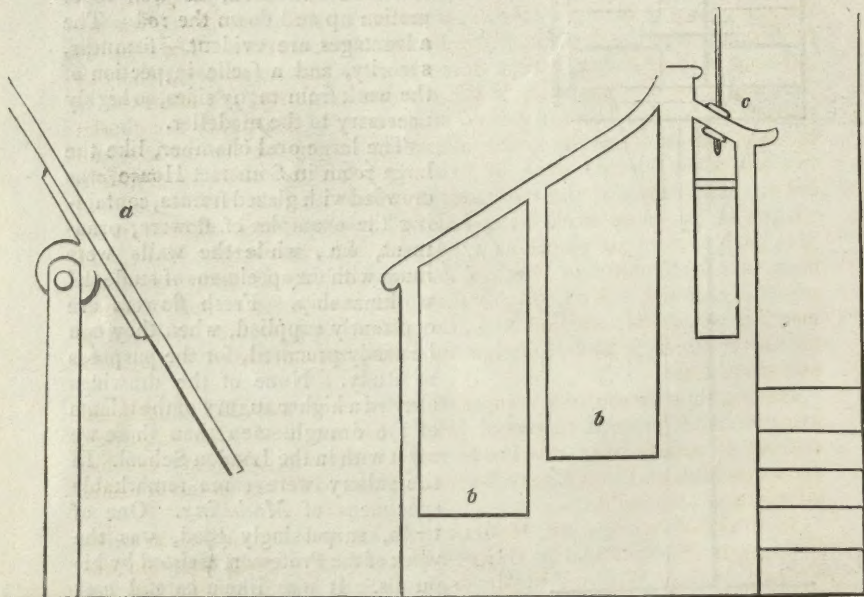
Royale presents the following enumeration of its objects—"Géométrie arithmétique, toisé, arpentage; architecture, coupe de pierre et de bois; sculpture d'ornemens; figure et animaux; fleurs et ornemens;"—a list that indicates a wide sphere of education. It is no wonder, therefore, that the names of seven or eight professors are appended. For these studies the building offers a large oval room, a long gallery, an amphitheatre for the study of the figure, a small lecture room, and a sort of cellar for the conservation of statues, casts, &c. The latter appeared to me an injudicious disposal, since the constant suggestions which beautiful works make, almost unconsciously, to the eye, cannot fail to be beneficial; especially as the impressions received in youth are the most enduring. Want of space, however, may be the cause. Economy of room, light, and the advantage of the students, were thoroughly effected in the other apartments. The amphitheatre for "the figure" is small, but well arranged. Two or three rows of seats, slightly elevated, are terminated by a platform, on which are fixed "stands" for twelve or fourteen modellers. Each stand, substantially constructed of



oak, is fixed at equal distance from the next, and presents so good a plan that I have subjoined a diagram of the back view. The board, (b) it will be seen, can be readily turned to meet the light in any direction by day, while at night the jointed candle-holder (a) admits of diminution and extension, as well as of motion up and down the rod. The advantages are evident,—firmness, security, and a facile inspection of the work from many sides, so highly necessary to the modeller.

The large oval chamber, like the large room in Somerset House, was crowded with glazed frames, containing the examples of flowers, ornament, &c., while the walls were hung with the specimens of students' workmanship. Fresh flowers are constantly supplied, when they can be easily procured, for the purposes of study. None of the drawings elicited a higher augury of the talents of the draughtsmen than those we meet with in the London School. In the gallery were some remarkable specimens of *Modelling*. One of them, surpassingly good, was the work of the Professor, assisted by his pupils. It was like a careful cast

from nature! A *Marine plant*, found on the north coast of France, was the subject of it, and is a favorite study at this school, on account of preserving its form so long. This studying from nature in the modelling department is carried to a great extent, and prizes are given for the best performances thus made. With a view perhaps to afford hints in this direction, the most carefully-made casts from nature were plentifully ranged around. The *ARTICHOKE*, I was informed, and even the *THISTLE*, with all its spines, constitute objects of frequent study with the modelling tool. In these efforts, as in the drawing ateliers before named, the exact imitation of nature is most rigidly aspired to, in order to produce a facility of handling and a minute exercise of the faculties of perception. Doubtless this is the chief source of the *power to execute*—a power which, once acquired, offers the ready and inestimable means of conveying the most subtle ideas of form. Along the wall in this gallery narrow benches were arranged, with a ledge underneath, affording a recess for sponges, cloths, clay, and modelling instruments; so that the surface of the working board need not be crowded with objects to distract the eye. About two feet above the benches a rod was fixed against the sides, whence casts and other articles could be suspended for copying—an excellent means for preserving due order, and facilitating the inspection of the casts, both by modellers and visitors. A small room, used for lecturing, was fitted up with two low benches (*b b*), a modelling range (*c*), and two supports for cartoons (*a*), as shown in the following section. Here, I understood, the professors make their comments on the art of design, the theory of ornament, the principles of architecture, &c. On the board (*a*) were two cartoon drawings in





tempera, beautifully executed, but evidently done at once, either as examples for illustration, or as copies.

Next to the Government School, the most important, from its objects, its number of students, and as an example of the unceasing efforts of the French to improve the knowledge of the community, is the *ECOLE COMMUNALE*, in the Rue Menilmontant. The fact that my attention was directed to this by one of the first bronzists in Paris—one of the partners of the firm of Eck and Durand—as the source of the excellence of his workmen, is an important testimony to the value of “Schools of Design,” in a commercial point of view. When visiting the bronze foundry of this gentleman, (to which I shall have to allude hereafter,) I was particularly struck with the skill evinced in two or three instances in the working of bronze ornament, which had come very roughly from the mould. This was chipped and chiseled with an accuracy, united with artistic grace, that elicited a wish to know where such artificers acquired so perfect a comprehension of the qualities of design. I was then informed that the bronze founders, anxious to improve their workmen, had established this “*Ecole Communale*,” which, producing good results, was taken up in a spirited manner, and made what it now is, by the municipality of Paris. Unpretending and workshop-like in its structure, yet admirable are the means it presents! The general arrangements corresponded with those of other schools of design, except in the predominance given to the studies of the human figure *from the Antique and the Life*. Many of the drawings executed in this department were on the walls, and would do credit to the students of any academy of art. The school is open from seven to ten at night, but the students who belong to the department of bronze manufactures are received there in the daytime, without extra remuneration. The monthly payment is three francs, except from the class just mentioned, who pay two, and another class who, to the number of thirty, are admitted to study gratuitously, “on the ground of poverty.” Six pupils are chosen to assist the professor in giving advice and changing the models, and two others are selected week by week, from all the class, to maintain order. The names of the refractory are inscribed in a book—a second offence in the same week being followed by expulsion. Three francs from each student are placed as a “deposit” on entering the *Ecole*, and from this fund wilful or careless damage done to the property of the school is repaired. *Modelling*, both of the human figure and of ornament, is extensively studied here, the plans being similar to those of the Government School of Design in Paris, but calculated for a more numerous class.

Having thus presented a resumé of my notes on the chief educational institutions, I proceed to record briefly the result of other enquiries, anxious to satisfy you, my Lords and Gentlemen, that my eye has been watchful, and that I have been solicitous to collect as much useful information as possible.

To works of SCULPTURE, MODELS in CLAY and WAX, COLLECTIONS of CASTS in PLASTER and in CARTON PIERRE, my careful attention was directed; also to Working in Metals, as bronze and iron: not judging from isolated examples scattered here and there, but carefully examining



the iron work which is to be found throughout Paris, in gratings, filling apertures of doors, in balconies, &c. &c. In addition to this, I gleaned such information as could be derived from visits to the ateliers of practical modellers, and to casting establishments. And here I may be permitted, perhaps, to premise that some difficulty is presented to a foreigner, under such circumstances. Entering a studio where numbers are under the guidance of one person, he cannot intrude his enquiries to such an extent as to cause a loss of valuable time. I therefore observed for myself, treasuring in my memory such mechanical or other contrivances as were likely to be beneficial to the practice of the School in this department of my labors.

In the works of Marochetti, Tricquetti, Barré, Vincent, and others—where the word "*Modelling*" can be most truly applied to their productions—the executive capacity displayed is truly remarkable, embracing every variety of the use of the modelling instruments, from the most broad and massive treatment to the most finished and minute. In the *sculpture d'ornement*, strictly speaking, the same display of power of execution is met with. This indeed is sometimes the only redeeming point in a profusion of skill without taste. Such is the case in some of the *magazins d'horlogerie*; almost the only instance that I saw of agreeable adaptation of sculptural design to a timepiece being in a model by Tricquetti, the artist who executed the gates of the Madeleine. Generally speaking, these designs were so puerile, or the subjects so badly selected, that nothing but poverty of remuneration could excuse them. Here, however, condemnation must end; good workmanship, knowledge, and taste, in almost all other instances, being found united. Every one acquainted with the application of sculpture to purposes of manufacture will be aware of the importance of the flexibility, sharpness, and truth of the modelling of the *original*. As is the matrix, so will be the metallic product of the mould. When the cast has to be filed, and chiseled, and chased, and burnished again and again, in consequence of defective modelling, the workman or artist has the disadvantage of using his plastic powers on the least tractable material. Thus, the grace which depends on the turn of a line, and on the infinite modulation of surface, readily eludes those efforts which could quickly have made the desired impression on wax or clay. When in Paris, Mr. Wilson called my attention to the fact, that what is done in England by "*workmen*," is done in France by "*artists*," in reference to these operations in metal; and he remarked that "the superiority in the *casting* there was owing to the greater care and finish in the modelling." My observations confirmed this opinion, and recalled to my mind the extreme solicitude with which the education of the modellers is watched in the French Schools of Design. Notwithstanding, however, this general finish of the first model, so well is the working hand informed and directed by the head, that I have seen leaflets and other ornaments of candelabra, &c., chiseled at once, with the utmost readiness and precision, out of a plaster block where the general form alone had been moulded. Here, something must be allowed for the facilities afforded by the plaster used in Paris. Until informed to the contrary, I could scarcely believe that it was not prepared for this purpose by some peculiar process. Admit-



ting of the most facile use of the chisel, however, it has the drawback of not permitting the employment of iron supports, without profuse oxidation. This difficulty they obviate by adopting, instead, pieces of wood, which are previously soaked, lest the subsequent swelling should crack the plaster. In making small models of the human figure, and in the more delicately marked portions of ornamental work, wax is generally adopted. In the Rue de Bac, white wax is to be procured of such a consistence as to take with the utmost sharpness the impression of the tool; but there is a composition still better suited to such operations—a *composition of wax with potatoe flour*. The latter has the effect of causing a most agreeable resistance in the resulting compound, and when a coloring material is introduced, is much employed in the Parisian ateliers.

As in modelling, so also in plaster casting, the French attain the greatest nicety. To the establishment devoted to this object, attached to the Ecole des Beaux Arts, under M. Jacquet's superintendence, I paid three visits. The wax composition here used for intricate portions, called the "*Mastic de Mouleur*," consists of the materials used in this country—white virgin wax and resin, with an admixture of plaster, but the two former in equal parts.\*

It is astonishing how many are the outlets, in Paris, for a superfluity of artistic talent of a certain order. Occupations very puerile in themselves, influence, nevertheless, the studies and destination of youths with an artistic turn of mind, by the certainty of employment they offer. The following is one specimen of the demands supplied by such a class as the "*Modeleurs en cire*," taken from an advertisement:—"Bustes pour coiffeurs, figures, enfans Jesus avec bras et mains mouvans, saints et saintes, bustes pour poupées, fleurs et fruits montées, corbeilles, vases, assiettes, &c." The application of decoration to the exteriors of houses is also much greater than in London,—ironwork in railings, &c. seldom appearing, even in the poorer streets, except in a beautiful form. Among the employments which engage the talents of the working class, sent out from the Schools of Design, there is one to which London as yet offers no parallel, either in the quantity or quality of the works achieved, or in the number of establishments in which the occupation is pursued. I allude to the fabrication of bronzes. One of the most interesting visits afforded me in Paris was that to the bronze foundry of MM. Eck and Durand, in the Rue de Crois Bornes. Many notes here made respecting the casts, from nature, of lizards, birds, &c., as being desirable for the School of Design, it would be trifling to transcribe, because I now find that they had been previously secured for the school by the Director's selection. At this place I had the good fortune to witness the preparations for two gigantic statues. One of them was recently taken from the mould; in the other case, the "core" was being formed. The processes were kindly pointed out by M. Durand. In another portion of the building the operations of the after-work of chasing,

\* An experienced Italian informs me, that it is better to increase the proportion of resin. Where the wax is plentiful enough to *yield*, the form is sometimes lost in the casting, but the *predominance of the resin* makes it so brittle as rather to break than yield, and thus, when taken out, the original modelling is found correctly preserved.



annealing, &c., were conducted. Then it was that the superior attainments of the employes attracted my notice, as before mentioned, the true artistic value of the original designs being thoroughly appreciated, and followed out in the most difficult cases, by the conductors of the working process. The *color* of the bronzes throughout the French capital is as varied as the peculiar tastes to which it is presumed to be necessary to appeal; and in many instances, it must be confessed, this taste must be rather of a peculiar description. In looking, however, to the grand results of the bronze foundries,—and particularly in that of MM. Eck and Durand, they offer to notice a most remarkable achievement in the color communicated to the material. This remark holds good also with reference to another repository of bronzerie which I inspected in the Rue Richelieu. A power is possessed by the French Fabricans des Bronzes, of *restoring the fire-color after the chiseling operations*, and, thus have obtained in many cases the lustrous, deep golden, brown of the old Florentine bronzes. I am informed that such establishments as those in question willingly remunerate, at a high price, the most distinguished artists for original designs; while their “artificers,” as previously indicated, are selected from nurseries of real art. Since my return I have been shown some fine specimens of bronze-working, with good color, in the studio of an English artist. The latter quality, however, in no way reached the generality of the French productions; and in regard to the finishing processes, he confessed there was considerable difficulty, in London, of obtaining the requisite amount of workmanlike skill united with artistic information. When we consider that in a small bronze model the slightest elevation sometimes indicates the appropriate prominence of bone, or swell of muscle, it is at once evident that in the union of a laborious process with the necessity for such delicacy of operation and perception, a careful education of the mind should precede the employment of the hand.

In the atelier of MM. Liennard and Emile,—one of the most celebrated in Paris, I witnessed an example of the sort of training which either accompanies the studies at the Schools of Design, or immediately succeeds them. Here were young men and lads of various ages, some employed in incipient efforts, others executing with facility the most difficult works. Here all kinds of design were commenced and completed, from the earliest sketch to the most finished working model. Besides, there were men carving the more elaborate and exquisite portions of mahogany work, &c. Models of candelabra, constructed plans of fonts, chimney pieces, gypsum matrices for iron gratings, and other things in great variety, were in active process. M. Emile also showed me designs for the panels ordered by Mr. Wilson, and one for a pistol handle of great beauty. At Liennard's were modelled the figures and ornamental portions of a triangular cabinet, which I believe attracted great attention at the Exposition. Having seen some of these models, I repaired to the cabinet maker's, to witness their execution in *ebony*, in which skill and finish of the best order were manifest. Almost everything in this cabinet maker's enormous establishment, with



the exception of this specimen, and a chaste, lonely oratory, in early gothic, was of the *Louis Quatorze* period; an indication of the prevailing taste.

It would be tedious to you, my Lords and Gentlemen, were I to detain you by remarks on a host of public works and buildings, the examination of which was carefully entered into, with a view to directing the attention of travelling pupils to objects of useful research, or increasing my own knowledge of the peculiarities of French skill, or the developments of ancient art. So little that is new could be communicated about some of these, that it may be sufficient to *enumerate* the other principal points to which I directed careful enquiry. These were the various collections of the *Louvre*; the churches of *St. Denys*, *St. Roch*, *St. Sulpice*, *Notre Dame*, *Notre Dame de Lorette*, the *Madeleine*, the *Musée d'Artillerie*, the *Luxembourg*, the *Jardin des Plantes*, with its accompanying museums of *Natural History* and *Comparative Anatomy*, the *Bourse*, with its imitations of *Relievo* by ABEL DE PUJOL, the *Hotel de Chuny*, and various dépôts of particular manufactures, such as the "*Emaux de Rubelles*," *silks of rare design*, *carpets*, *FELTED tapisserie*, *damasks*, the *Beauvais* ware, a large collection of *Carton pierre*, &c. &c. To these I was led, not by a traveller's curiosity, but by the desire of extracting information likely to further the objects proposed in my visit to Paris, or at the request of the Director.

The Louvre contains within, and on its walls, not only its celebrated collection of fine art, but also a mass of decorations, and other works worthy the special attention of the ornatista. There is a pair of gates, in one of its galleries, of admirable design and workmanship. The new gallery called that of the "*Renaissance*," is likewise full of interesting matter. As this is less likely to be known, I may specify, as prominent objects of note, the ornamental sculptures on the two chimney pieces,—the brass bas-reliefs at the base of the bronze statues,—the draperies on the busts of the kings, (as specimens of working in marble),—the unfinished statue, by Michael Angelo,—and lastly, two of the most admirable examples of architectural design, the *Tombs of Philip and of Ferdinand*. Respecting these tombs I communicated with Mr. Wilson, suggesting the value of duplicate casts, at least of portions, if they could be obtained. The models in the gallery are, however, the only ones extant, having been made expressly on the order of the Government.

The Tomb of Philip, erected in 1555, by Charles V., consists of a broad base, on which stand groups of figures that, at the four angles, support a sarcophagus. On this latter, crowning a composition of admirable repose, rest the images of Philip and his Queen, in slightly varied attitudes, expressive at once of dignity and resignation. Around the sides of the sarcophagus passes a chain of ornament, composed chiefly of the order of the Golden Fleece, suspended at intervals from lions' mouths. Along the base, which is square and massive, there is a perfect and rich embossing of ornamental sculpture, united with architectural forms, which embrace compositions of figures, some in the round, others in varied relievo. The tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella is



inferior, but still beautiful. A grand defect in this gallery, at present, is the want of a catalogue.

One of the public places promising least to the enquirer after artistic design would have appeared to be the *Musée d'Artillerie*. Yet to the armour gallery of this museum would I direct the attention of the student. Independently of its valuable range of illustrations of the ancient steel panoplies, there are to be found,—on the surface of these beautiful relics,—*designs*, the mechanical graving of which is not more exquisite than the play of line and well-contrived intricacies of the ornaments. Some of the latter, if not already published, would form the subject of valuable sketches, as a prolific source of suggestion for further combinations, and in some instances as specimens of the *inlaying of metals* in the middle ages.

The ancient gateways of *Notre Dame* and *St. Denys*, and the gates of *La Madeleine*, are worthy the most careful attention; the *Hotel de Cluny* and the manufactures of *Beauvais* ware are also objects of valuable research to the student of ornamental design.

Having thus made the Council cognizant of the principal facts which engaged my attention during my sojourn in Paris, I will close my Report with such reflections as arise from the impression there conveyed.

Though everywhere in Paris,—in the signs of trade, in the adornment of the cafés, and interior of the shops and theatres, in the public fountains, in the iron-work of the doors and shop windows,—there is manifested a yearning after beauty of decoration, it is not to be contravened that, in spite of all the arrangements for educating the eye, much meets the critical view not only without satisfying the love of real beauty, but with a downright offence to good taste and common sense. The principal cause of the latter impression is to be found in the mal-adaptation of the ornament, or more frequently in the employment of conflicting “*styles*” along the same superficies. In illustration, I have already instanced the designs for time-pieces, but the offence which results from conflicting styles of ornament is generally displayed in the department of decorative painting. However beautiful the general effect,—however consistent particular parts may be with the portions near them, there appears often a want of harmony in the “*tout ensemble*,” and a frequent forgetfulness of the pleasure to be derived from seeing the ornament made to adorn, but not altogether to conceal, the main forms of construction. The very employment of the mirror,—the prolific, and gorgeous, source of magnificence in Parisian saloons—is adopted not unfrequently in places where solidity should be manifest, the general requirement of spacious rooms being a sense of security in the first place, and of ornament thereafter. Nevertheless, wherever the genius of the inventor has been courageous enough to search for himself some untrodden ground, as in the weaving of flowers and other natural objects into combinations of his own, without reference to any particular “*style*,” there the really artistic feeling of the people makes itself manifest, and meets its due reward in general praise. As an example, I may allude to that which various descriptions and specimens have now made well-known here—the *Beauvais* ware. In this, the genius of an artist



Box 78

of high standing in his profession—ZIEGLER, the painter of the altarpiece at the *Madeleine*—has worked out the most admirable and suitable combinations of form adapted to articles of varied description; thus giving to an otherwise inferior manufacture a commercial value recognised throughout Europe, and deservedly conferring on himself as much yearly remuneration as the choicest productions of his easel would have enabled him to procure. In such application of high artistic skill and design to purposes of mechanical ingenuity and general use, one cannot but recognise a most beneficent employment of the gifts of nature, which thus become the means of placing before the humblest of the community those forms of beauty and grace the love of which is latent in every breast. Thus it was that our own excellent FLAXMAN labored for the Potteries, and thus also, it is to be hoped, the genius of Great Britain may again exert itself to spread the sources of enlightenment, while aiding the cause of manufactures. For it cannot be concealed, that the grand support of many manufactures, in both countries, *will henceforward be based on superiority of design.* The arts of design, among the French, much and long as they have been cultivated, are still ever in a state of progress; not only is technical excellence on the increase from year to year, but, what is still more important, the defects of TASTE are continually rectified by the opening of new exhibitions to the public, and the consequent creation of a higher standard of general criticism on artistic productions. Hence, as is manifest to the stranger in Paris, the artists there, of all classes, have an advantage over us in the fact that their labors are addressed to masses of persons, all more or less imbued with a wish to understand art, and all, indeed, by the policy and munificence of the Government, furnished with ample and ever-ready means of general inquiry or deep research. In scarcely a single instance do the museums of higher art fail to exhibit a large admixture of such specimens of architectural and other “ornament” as furnish the most valuable lessons. Hence, perhaps, it results that when a prudent artist experiences a want of encouragement for works of more exalted aim, his early perceptions have been so awakened to the study of Ornament that he is enabled to throw into the pursuit of the latter the talent which could not force its way in the other branches. In the French capital, doubtless from similar causes, great is *the reciprocity of respect between artists of various grades*,—the line between the “workman” and the “artist” is not so jealously defined; and thus the Ornataista, conscious that the principle of beauty which should pervade his productions will not be overlooked or undervalued, works with a self-appreciation that elevates his views without damaging their utility.

That the SCHOOLS OF DESIGN now existing in England and Scotland may produce similar results is not only to be eagerly hoped, but to be reasonably anticipated. Some persons would appear to expect that we can overleap the ordinary processes of time, and that, the wish expressed, a race of working artists must spring forth at once. Germany and France show us the contrary, but they also have enabled us to discover the shortest road to the attainment of certain high qualities. In the latter



country Schools of Design have existed for the greater part of a century, following upon the labors of a race of artists of many climes and most varied skill, who have necessarily left behind them much of that knowledge which in schools of art is known to be transmitted by *tradition*. Thus the names of Jean Goujon, Poussin, Le Sueur, and others, illustrated the genius of France at a time when England was entirely dependent on foreign skill. By Benvenuto Cellini and other great artists from beyond the Alps, Parisian knowledge has likewise been amply replenished, and their valuable lessons doubtless were handed down, with care,—the troubles of the State having seldom put a stop to the development of its fine arts.

What, then, are the hints to be derived from the system pursued in the development of art in the French metropolis? They appear to be suggested, most peculiarly, from these sources:—

The earnest studies *after Nature* in the ateliers;

The system of *competition*, and the consecutive patronage of the higher prizetolders;

The *extensive range of acquirements* contemplated in the schemes of education in Schools of Design; and, finally,

The exquisite care and finish of the *modelling*, as preliminary to the operation of *casting*.

With an earnest hope that the Report which I thus humbly present to your consideration, may merit approval,

I have the honor to be,

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

Your obedient humble Servant,

HENRY JAMES TOWNSEND.

November 2nd, 1844.

HJ

27.8.96

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